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Developing a Process to Build Partner Capacity for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction

One of the greatest challenges to U.S. national security is the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of those who would use them against the U.S. homeland, interests abroad, or partners and allies. Because the United States simply does not have the resources, access, or intelligence necessary to stop all WMD threats, it must help partner countries appreciate the urgency of this problem and develop cooperative approaches to combat WMD threats as close to the source as possible.

Although the United States has instituted a number of programs to combat WMD proliferation, a coordinated effort is needed to enhance partners' border security, WMD detection, interdiction, and other capabilities to address the global nature of the threat. When nations are less capable, it is critical to focus U.S. assistance on building partner nations' indigenous capacity to combat WMD threats.

A recent RAND research effort for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency sought to answer a number of key questions about building partner capacity (BPC):

- Where should the United States act and with whom should it partner?
- What should the United States do and how should it do it? In particular, what BPC activities can be applied, and how can the Department of Defense gauge the willingness and capacity of potential partners to work with the United States to combat WMD within their own borders?
- Finally, how can the United States know that it has done the right things with the right partners in the right ways?

The research team produced a report that develops and then applies a four-step process for

Abstract

How can the United States better support its partners' efforts to combat the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation? Although the United States has instituted a number of programs to combat the spread of WMD, it does not have the resources necessary to stop all WMD threats. Instead, it needs to pursue a more coordinated effort to enhance partners' border security, WMD detection, interdiction, and other capabilities to address the global nature of the threat.

developing regional approaches for BPC to combat WMD threats. The steps include

- identifying capabilities and desired end states relative to the WMD threat
- working with potential partners
- identifying relevant BPC ways and means
- developing a framework to assess the effectiveness of BPC programs and activities.

The report also provides specific recommendations that propose a means for U.S. planners to efficiently and effectively build partner capacity to combat WMD.

Identifying Capabilities and Desired End States Relative to the WMD Threat

For step one, Department of Defense BPC planners should work closely with regional experts and intelligence offices in an effort to understand what the potential WMD threats are, where they exist, how they are evolving, who is involved, and how they affect U.S. security interests. The planners should have a clear objective in mind when considering whether to engage in activities to build a partner's capacity to combat WMD.

The RAND authors offered a number of specific recommendations pertaining to step one:

- Link programmatic ends to strategic guidance.
- Hold regular planning sessions with the various BPC program managers to ensure that the aims of the programs are complementary.
- Conduct regular country-specific or functional working groups to provide a forum for sharing ideas and identifying lessons.
- Define and publish organizational roles and responsibilities for WMD threat-reduction stakeholders.

Working with Potential Partners

For step two, planners need to discover which capacities are needed and how the United States should build partner capacity to combat WMD. Planners must gain insight into the roles that potential partners can fill by examining the partners' capacity to combat WMD and their willingness to work with the United States. To develop this understanding, the authors recommended that BPC planners develop criteria for and identify indicators of a partner's willingness and capacity. These criteria can be grouped under two general categories—political criteria and combating WMD stance—examples of which are detailed in the table.

These criteria, while illustrative, demonstrate the importance of considering a range of factors that can help describe a potential partner's relevance to a WMD threat, as well as how

Criteria for Assessing Willingness and Capacity

Category	Capacity Indicator	Willingness Indicator
Political criteria		
Degree of internal governance	√	
Degree of regional influence	√	
Ties to proliferating states		√
Combating WMD stance		
Ability to control borders	√	
Indigenous WMD programs	√	
Technical/scientific capability	√	
Congruence with U.S. combating WMD priorities		√
Participation in regional and global nonproliferation initiatives		√
Willingness to enact and enforce export controls		√

the United States should approach working with that potential partner. Planners should coordinate with interagency and international counterparts to gain insights and to look for opportunities for collaboration.

Identifying Relevant BPC Ways and Means

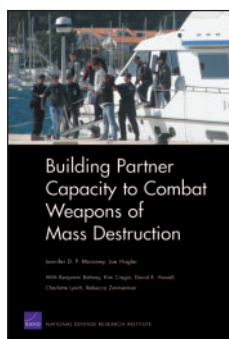
Step three is designed to help planners identify relevant BPC ways and means. The research team recommended that planners widen their knowledge of other U.S. government, allied, and international and regional organizations' BPC for combating WMD activities. This process should include using available information-sharing systems, attending and participating in other agencies' working groups, and even supporting other agencies' events and activities. The report provides a detailed framework for identifying the activity gaps and redundancies on a regional basis. By applying such a framework, BPC planners will have a better understanding of the most effective and efficient ways to best apply resources.

Developing a Framework to Assess the Effectiveness of BPC Programs and Activities

For step four, the authors recommended that BPC for combating WMD planners implement the following seven-step framework to assess the effectiveness of BPC programs:

1. Select ends, ways, and means for the analysis.
2. Disaggregate the desired end state into measurable objectives.
3. Identify programs, focus countries, and relevant objectives.
4. Identify input, output, outcome indicators, and external factors.
5. Link program aims and their relationship to end state objectives.
6. Conduct an assessment.
7. Determine the overall program and/or activity contribution to the desired end state.

Specifically, planners should begin by conducting a pilot assessment of a few select programs to test the framework's application in a specific country or region. Further, the research team recommended that Department of Defense leaders consider establishing a single resource advocate for BPC to combat WMD programs.



This research brief describes work done for the RAND National Defense Research Institute and documented in *Building Partner Capacity to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, by Jennifer D. P. Moroney and Joe Hogler, with Benjamin Bahney, Kim Cragin, David R. Howell, Charlotte Lynch, and Rebecca Zimmerman, MG-783-DTRA, 2009, 140 pp., \$37.50, ISBN: 978-0-8330-4552-2 (available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG783/>). This research brief was written by Michael J. Neumann. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. RAND® is a registered trademark.

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